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Factors that affect Burundi students' use of english word stress : a case study of the junior and senior level students of the departement of english language and literature at the University of Burundi

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**FACTORS THAT AFFECT BURUNDI STUDENTS' USE OF
ENGLISH WORD STRESS: A CASE STUDY OF THE JUNIOR
AND SENIOR LEVEL STUDENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI**

By

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Langue et Littérature Anglaise**"

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DEDICATION

To God, my creator,
To my cherished parents,
To dearest brothers and sisters,

I dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The achievement of this work is a result of many people's contribution. The later deserve deep gratitude.

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Last but not least, I praise the Lord, from whom all good things come. I acknowledge Him for the fact that after creating me, He has offered me protection of my life and helped in all till the realization of this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

DELL: Department of English Language and Literature

FASS: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

VOA: Voice of America

RP: Received Pronunciation

adj.: Adjective

L1: First Language or Mother Tongue

EAC: East African Community

Capital letters within a word stand for stressed Syllable

ENS: Ecole Normale Supérieure

IAP: Institute of Applied Pedagogie

ˈ: Stands for Stress

n: noun

v: verb

Q: Question

Aux: Auxiliary

ABSTRACT

This work sought to study the way Burundi students use stress of English. The study paid attention to the factors which induce students to certain misuse of the aspect of stress patterns. This study sought to find out the impact of three elements. First, the study examined the impact of language interference on the use of English word stress. Second, it investigated the impact of the complex nature of stress rules on the students' attitudes towards learning stress patterns. At last, the study evaluated the impact of students' poor reading of materials related to stress patterns. After the analysis of data collected with the first instrument, we found out that a number of words were uttered with wrong stress because of the influence of either French accents or Kirundi. In addition, we found out that other words were mispronounced with stress placed on wrong syllables as a result of generalization of rules governing the stress patterns. In the analysis of data from both the students' and lecturers' questionnaires, we found out that English stress is an aspect that causes trouble to students but attracts less of their attention. The reason is that, the patterns of stress are a difficult aspect of the English language. As a matter of fact, very few students are interested in the reading of books related to this aspect of the English language in particular and linguistics in general. In the light of our findings, a number of recommendations were formulated.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The English language has spread around the world. It has become a major tool of communication in various domains of modern life. In this sense Burundi is not left behind. The English language has gained an increasing and considerable attention. Today many people in Burundi are in need of knowing English. The reason is that Burundi has many interactions with English speaking communities in various ways. This includes business, international relations, and abroad education.

The introduction of English in Burundi is not a colonial legacy. It was introduced after independence. The language was first introduced in secondary school in the second year and is taught as a subject. In education, it is French which functions as a medium of instruction. In contrast, in the DELL, English is used as a medium of instruction. Then the students of this department are expected to be good at this language.

A language consists of four skills; namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Learning a language supposes generally dealing with all these four skills. However, in learning of English in Burundi, oral English is not given its due attention. Ndayishimiye (2011:62) notes that:

The problem is that, the students do not know or do not see the necessity or the importance of the developing their oral fluency since they think that fluency would develop while learning other aspects of the language.

Students ignore what they have to do for developing oral skill. This implies that some aspects of the oral English may not be well mastered.

Learning a language and its acquisition are interdependent. Learning must be completed by other factors so as to have effective acquisition. These factors may

include setting or environment of study as well as strategies undertaken by both students and teachers. In Burundi, English is learned in an environment which is linguistically dominated by Kirundi on the one hand, and French on the other hand which is the language of all intellectuals.

1.1. Background to the study

Language plays an important role to mankind in the society. It is the main tool of communication. Language is used in order to develop, maintain, and strengthen all man's institutions, that is; cultural, religious, political, economic etc. For this, a society may use one or even more languages. For the case of Burundi, four languages are used namely Kirundi, French, Kiswahili and English.

However, linguistically speaking, Burundi is far from being a heterogeneous society. It is rather a linguistically homogeneous county. Edwards (1985:117) notes that "Burundi has, unlike many of its African neighbours, an historical unity in which Kirundi has been the only Bantu language spoken throughout the country." Referring to this Ndayishimiye (2011:10) supports the view by saying what follows:

Rwanda and Burundi are countries which are linguistically unified, that is; apart from implication which is relatively limited, all the people or inhabitants use or understand the Kinyarwanda and Kirundi languages.

This means that all Burundians can communicate perfectly in Kirundi. The need of interacting with other societies motivates such countries to teach their people other international languages. For the purpose of interacting with English speaking communities, after colonization, Burundi has introduced English in its educational system. It was added to Kirundi (L1 or native language of the

majority of the people) and French (the language of all intellectuals). This intends to create Burundi a multilingual society.

In multilingual societies, people face the problem of language influence. That is; the languages which are well mastered often influence the half mastered languages. Nizonkiza (2006) says: “This multilingual complexity is further complicated by extensive appeal of English, has increased the rate of code mixing, code switching, borrowing and interference...”

The students of the department of English Language and Literature (DELL) learn English and use it as a medium of instruction and this helps to overcome many imperfections. However, these students have spent a long time using French as a medium of instruction from primary up to the end of secondary schools. This may imply that their performance in English, French and Kirundi is not at equal standing.

The mastery of a second language depends on various factors, among which the setting and the learner’s strategies related to what is learned play a very important role. The linguistic milieu of the learner has necessarily an influence on the acquisition. It can be helpful or inhibiting.

The DELL students learn English in a linguistically homogeneous society. All students communicate perfectly in Kirundi. Apart from class, students can spend all time in exchanging in their native language. This reduces the opportunities of speaking English and it handicaps the process of its acquisition in general especially subtle elements such as stress. In addition, there is a strong need of taking effective strategies which can help to master and understand this language and be able to communicate in it effectively.

Today, the linguistic situation of Burundi tends to change. From the increasing number of NGOs after the late civil conflict and the entrance of Burundi in

EAC, English is gaining a high status because many people are now very interested in it. Nizonkiza (2006) puts the following:

English is today a powerful force that bears with it prospects of international success, given the ethnic insecurity that followed the 1994 massacres, employed avenues in the international peace keeping missions and NGOs currently working in the country; it fuels prospects of migrating to western countries and links the international workers to the local population in the social affairs they now have engaged.

During the resolution of the late political conflict cited above, there was an introduction of many English speaking people in the country. The many favoured jobs were given under the condition of knowing and being able to use English.

The economic interests and international cooperation increasingly open Burundi to English communities. For instance, on July 1st 2010 Burundi joined EAC (East African Community) where English and Kiswahili are the official languages. This has made an increasing interest of Burundi towards these languages. As a matter of fact, English and Kiswahili have been added to the curriculum of the primary schools. To the students of this department, we think that this situation should instigate an eagerness for the best mastery of this language in all its aspects as well as stress.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Knowing and respecting stress patterns is crucial for oral communication as far as the English language is concerned; for instance, in listening, words are recognized by means of their stress. The students of the DELL use English as a medium of instruction. They also undergo many courses which should help them develop oral performance. In addition, students are given many exposes for this purpose. This gives to students more opportunities to practice the language. We

expect these students to be good at speaking as far as stress patterns are included. Unfortunately, the students still have shortcomings on the aspect of stress patterns. This situation did not attract attention of previous researchers. Thus, it is worthy to carry out a study in order to find out the causes of the problem and try to propose solutions.

1.3. Motivation

The study was motivated by two main factors: first, in secondary school, we used to say that English is easier than French because of the absence of accents in English. In contrast, the researcher was astonished to discover that this opinion was erroneous when he was introduced to stress patterns of the English language in the first year at University in the course of British Literature in its poetry genre. Second, apart from the fact that the researcher was aware of his personal pronunciation problems, he noticed that the situation was quite general among students. Stress was among the challenges mostly faced by students. However, even though we thought that the problem was going to be easily and quickly solved, rather, it was not the case. I was shocked to see that students still have problems in respecting the high and low syllables. Then, a desire to know the real causes which are behind this situation was born; hence, the urge to undertake this investigation.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the factors or causes of stress word misuse among Burundi students. The study intends to produce an academic document which displays the causes of some mistakes and errors made on this aspect of English. This work is articulated on the following three objectives:

-To examine the impact of language interference on the use of English word stress.

- To investigate the impact of complex nature of stress rules on students' attitude towards learning stress patterns.
- To evaluate the impact of students' poor reading of materials related to stress patterns.

1.5. Research Questions

This study is built on the following three research questions:

1. To what extent does language interference cause misuse of word stress?
2. Does the complexity of stress rules have any negative impact on students' attitude in the learning stress patterns?
3. How far do students of the Department of English Language and Literature read material related to English word stress?

1.6. Hypotheses

The present study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. French and Kirundi interference is the cause of many stress mistakes among Burundi students
2. The complex nature of stress patterns does not facilitate learning and students lose interest in learning this aspect
3. Students of the Department of English Language Literature do not have the reading culture, and do not know that the library contains books that may help in improving the pronunciation of English, including stress patterns.

1.7. Scope and Delimitation

For effective oral communication, syllable production does not only involve being correct in spelling and sound articulation. It also requires accuracy in stress placement within a word. As far as stress placement in a word is

concerned, we investigate the factors that hamper correctness in the stressing of oral English speech among students of DELL.

The study is carried out in the Department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Burundi. This institution is located in Bujumbura city. As far as the target population is concerned, students of Third and Fourth years, that is; respectively junior and senior levels were targeted. The choice of students was motivated by the fact that they have been in contact with English for a long time, that is; more than two years in university.

1.8. Importance of Study

The study is oriented in finding out the factors that handicap correct stress production in oral English and try to find out solutions. The study intends to make an academic document which will be useful to students, lecturers and programme elaborators.

1.9. Definition of key Terms

-Syllable: Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines syllable as:

A unit of spoken language that is bigger than a speech sound and consists of one or more vowel sounds alone or of a syllabic consonant sounds preceding or following.

A word can be made of one syllable "monosyllabic" or can be made of more syllables, a "polysyllabic" word. For instance, the word; *a* or, *be* etc are monosyllabic words. A word can be made of two syllables. For example the word *garden*: gar-den, *hotel*: ho-tel etc. Other words can be made of three syllables. For example, *September*: sep-tem-ber, *department*: de-part-ment etc. There are also words made of four syllables. For example *information*: in-for-ma-tion, *January*: ja-nu-ar-y etc.

-Stress: stress is the force or intensity by which we articulate a syllable. According to MacGregor (2002:62): “Stress refers to the force or volume with which the note of a syllable is struck.”

-Stressed Syllable: It is the syllable which is produced with a high intensity or a syllable that carries a stress.

-Unstressed syllable: Unlike the stressed syllable, it is the syllable produced without any stress or with low intensity.

1.10. Conclusion

In few words, this chapter introduces the study. It deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, the motivation and the key terms. The following chapter talks about related aspects that other researchers have already done in the area under study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is of paramount importance to any scientific work like this. It makes an overview of related aspects that other researchers have already done in the field under study. This is because science is a continuum of discoveries. New researchers start from previous works and push further to what is not yet reached. First, we deal with some theories related to the topic; second we deal with detailed definitions as well as characteristics of stresses of English. In addition, we look at the role played by stress in a word and a speech. Furthermore, we look at the challenges encountered by adult learners on the aspect of stress patterns as well as the possible strategies that should be adopted in learning the stress patterns of the English language.

2.1. Pronunciation of English

Pronunciation is an important part of the spoken language. The word pronunciation refers to the way a speech sound, a phoneme, and a syllable are articulated by the speaker. The way that a speaker articulates his speech has a great influence on the way the listener will perceive and understand the utterance or the message transmitted. This is the reason why a learner of a language has to pay attention to pronunciation as well as other aspects of the language he is learning. Referring to pronunciation Tench (1981:1) argues;

Pronunciation is not an optional extra for the language learner, any more than grammar, vocabulary or any other aspect of the language is. If a learner's general aim is to talk intelligibly to others in another language, a reasonable pronunciation is important.

Pronunciation for a learner is a problematic situation. This is because there are many accents and dialects in English due to a number of reasons; personal, morphology, geography and history. O'Connor (1950:5) notes the following:

...there are as many different kinds of it; no two people speak exactly alike. We can always hear differences between them and the pronunciation of English varies a great deal in different geographical areas.

This means that two people within one locality cannot speak exactly the same at one hundred per cent. The reason is that our speech organs are different in size from a person to another. Also, pronunciation of English varies from country to country. Todd (1984:4) distinguishes more than sixty pidginized English in the world; and this geographical spread of English has led to various types of accents. For instance, in UK, there is variation of English from an area to another. Roach (1991:5) puts the following

...there are many different accents in England, but the range becomes very much wider if the accents of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Scotland and Wales are included in British and with Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom) are taken into account.

Outside the UK, there are different accents such as American English, Australian English. Also, in the former colonies of Great Britain, English is spoken with particular differences. This is the case, for instance, in Western Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa where the language is spoken with influence from local languages.

This variation has raised a question to teachers and learners; "Which type of variety should be learned?" We have to bear in mind that linguistically speaking no accent is superior to another. In order to avoid being partial Received Pronunciation (RP) was chosen to be taught in schools. In this sense,

Roach (1991:5) puts what follows:

RP is the accent that has always been chosen by British teachers to teach to foreign learners and is the accent that has been most fully described and has the basis for textbooks and pronouncing dictionaries.

RP is the abbreviation of Received Pronunciation. It refers to a type of English which is taught in schools and used by BBC announcers. It is a non-regional accent. Roach (op cit) goes on saying:

It is most familiar as the accent used by most announcers and newspapers on serious national and international BBC broadcasting channels. It has for a long time been identified by quaint name Received Pronunciation (usually abbreviated to its initials, RP)

Stress position in some words can be influenced by the type of accent. That is; a stress on one word may shift from a syllable to another depending on the type of accent. For instance, in British English and American English one word may be stressed differently. Polpauf (1984:39) illustrates this with the following examples:

| British English | American English |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. 'Yugoslave | Yugos'lave |
| 2. Regis'tar | 'Registar |
| 3. Mous'tache | 'Moustache |
| 4. Re'veille(v) | 'Reveille |
| 5. frag'ment | 'fragment |
| 6. seg'ment | 'segment |

A careless learner can get confused with these differences. This situation needs to be studied carefully.

2.2. Language Interference

Before dealing with the definition of *language interference*, it is better to start with *language transfer*, because the former is a branch of the latter.

2.2.1. Language Transfer

According to Richards et al (1985:160), 'Language Transfer is the effect of one language on the learning of another.' This means that learners of a new language have the tendency of using some patterns or rules of their mother tongue (first language or L1) or any other language previously known. This happens in the learning and in the production of that new language. This phenomenon may be good (helpful) or bad (inhibiting). That leads to the existence of two types of language transfer.

Linguists distinguish two opposite types of language transfer. Richards et al go on saying:

*....two transfer may occur: **Negative transfer**, also known as interference is the use of a negative pattern or rule which leads to an error, or inappropriate form in the target language...**Positive transfer** makes learning easier and may occur when both the native language and the target language have the same form.*

Learning a new language is helped by previous linguistic knowledge. We see that when the learner does not pay attention to what he is doing, he runs the risk of producing incorrect forms due to excessive use of what is already known. This is negative transfer.

2.2.2. Language Interference

Language interference is the same as the negative transfer. It has consequences in the production of the target language. These consequences are various errors committed by the learner in his L2. This situation occurs when a learner uses a previous form of his L1 (or any previously learned or acquired language) into the target language whereas the two languages are different. Weireich cited by Ntahobari (1996: 29) defines language interference as follows:

Those instances of deviation from the norms of the language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language i.e. as a result of language contact.

When someone speaks more than one language, he is a bilingual. When he uses a form of one language into another in an inappropriate way, it is language interference because one language makes influences on another. Thus, bilinguals should pay attention to their languages so as not to mix inappropriately forms of their languages. Stress patterns can also be affected by the phenomenon of language interference. Odlin (1989:117) says; ‘although cross-linguistics influences on pronunciation frequently involve segmental contrasts, the influences are also evident in supra-segmental contrasts involving stress, rhythm and other factors.’

It is clear that stress placement in English can be difficult and erroneously applied to bilinguals if they do not care about the way this aspect normally functions in the English language. There are influences that come from previously known languages such as mother tongue usually abbreviated L1. Other languages previously learned can also influence stress patterns and can be the source of errors and mistakes. For Burundi learners, Kabura (1999:32) claims that many errors are from purely French influence. These mistakes are caused by what she calls misleading similarities. This means that one word can

exist in two languages with the same form but with different pronunciation or meaning. For example the word *car* exists in English and in French but with different meanings. In English the word refers to a kind of vehicle but means because in French. In addition, the word *information* exists in both English and French with the same form and the same meaning but with different pronunciation. This view is supported by Kabayiro (1988:58) who also assumes that the learner's possessions of French loans can be inhibitive.

This is what interests the researcher. The students targeted by our study have Kirundi as L1, and French, the previously learned language. French has many similarities with English. English learners who have the background of French run the risk accounting language interferences or negative transfer. Then we need to carry out a study and find out if language interference is a real problem among Burundi students on the aspect of stress in English.

2.3. Stress

The term *stress* refers to one of the supra-segmental features of certain languages. English is one of the languages that make use of stress on its syllables in oral communication. There are other languages that use stress on their words. These languages are, for example, German, French, Polish, Czech and Kiswahili. However, English word stress patterns are different from the stress patterns of those languages. For this, Roach (1991:88) says the following:

As is well known, English is not one of those languages where stress word can be decided simply in relation to the syllable of the word, as can be done in French (where last syllable is usually stressed), Polish (where the syllable before last-the penultimate syllable-is stressed) or Czech (where the first syllable is stressed).

English stressed syllables can occupy any position in the word, that is; at the first position, the second position or the last position depending on the word.

This is what makes stress of English a complex matter. Spencer (1996:241) qualifies English stress as **free stress system** (words can be stressed, in principle, on any syllable) in opposition to **fixed stress system** (stressed syllables occupy a fixed place in the word) of some other languages.

Stress has attracted the attention of many linguists of various periods of time. We can say, for example, Bloomfield (1933), Heffner 1950), Beckman (1986), Spencer (1996), etc. In some of their works stress is dealt with as a chapter, sub-chapter or even as a sub-sub-chapter. This means that there is little description of it. However, in other works like of Poldhauf (1984), Wells (1990) etc are based exclusively on stress patterns. They are well detailed works and merit particular attention in the field. Since various authors studied stress, it is clear that various definitions have come out. They are different but have something in common.

2.3.1. Definition of Stress

In general, stress refers to the force with which a word or a syllable is produced or uttered. According to Bloomfield quoted by Beckman (1986:46)

Stress that is, intensity, or loudness-consist a greater amplitude of sounds, and is produced by means of more energetic movements, such as pumping more breath, bringing vocal cords closer for voicing the muscles more vigorously for oral articulation. (Bloomfield1933:111)

Through this definition, we find the idea of loudness associated with stressed syllable. The loudness is caused by greater force used during the sending out of the air in the speech sound articulation. A syllable produced with greater force will be more audible than the surrounding syllables which are produced with less force. This idea of loudness is also found in other definitions. For instance, Quirk et al (1985:1589) say that Stress is closely associated with loudness or amplitude on the one hand and articulation on the other hand.

However, since loudness is not always caused by stress, this idea is challenged by other scholars who think that it is good to look for other parameters. Katamba (1989:221) supports this idea of pitch or length. Spencer (1996:241) supports this idea of pitch when characterizing stressed syllables. He argues that: “They also tend to longer duration as well as higher intensity, but both of these factors are usually subordinated to pitch.” Poldauf (1984:12) defines stress in comparison to neighbouring syllables which are not stressed. He puts what follows:

By stressing in the spoken form of a language we understand, using greater force (applying more articulatory energy) when pronouncing an element of articulated speech which can be opposed to another element, or elements of the same rank.

By comparing stressed syllables and unstressed syllables we find out different levels.

2.3.2. Levels of Stress

When we speak English, there is shifting from stressed to unstressed syllables or vice-versa. This creates three different levels of syllables in pitch and length in the speech. This inequality of stresses gives birth to primary, secondary, and intermediate stresses. Roach (1991:87)

We have now identified two levels of stress: primary and secondary, as well as a third level which can be called unstressed and regarded as being the absence of any recognizable amount of prominence.

Primary stress is the highest level of stressed syllable. It is found in any word containing a stressed syllable. The **unstressed syllable** is the lowest level (the absence of prominence). These two levels are found in any word containing either one or more syllables. On the other side, secondary stress is the middle

level of these levels. We find **secondary stress** in polysyllabic words. Heffner (1950:26) mentions the following:

For disyllabic words, it is often sufficient to distinguish between stressed and unstressed syllables; for polysyllabic words, it is often necessary to distinguish between primary (full), secondary (half), and minimal stress.

Some linguists tend to recognize primary and secondary stress levels and seem to neglect the unstressed level. Consequently, they treat it apart. For example, Roach (1991:87), on his part, sees it as a third level. Jackson (1982:45) mentions that “...there are three degrees of stress which are primary stress, secondary stress and the unstressed syllable.” No matter how they view them, both recognize the existence of the three types.

2.4. How is Stress Recognized?

We are going to describe stress in two ways; that is orally and transcription with phonetic symbols.

2.4.1. Orally

We know that a speech is between at least, two people (except in monologue speeches); the speaker and listener or hearer. Then, the speech is made between two individuals. In the same way there are two ways to identify stress within an uttered word: one is **production** and another is **perception**. Production refers to what the speaker does and perception to what a stress sounds like in the ear of the hearer (listener). Roach (1991:8) argues as follows:

It is important to understand that there are two different ways of approaching this question; one is to consider what the speaker does in producing stressed syllables and the other is to being to consider what characteristics of a sound make a syllable seem to a listener to be stressed.

In other words, we can study stress from the point of view of production and perception.

These two ways are complementary and are interdependent. One is influenced by the other; that is; the way a word is produced will necessarily influence the way it will be perceived. This is the reason why learners of a language have to study carefully its pronunciation. Lehiste (1970:106) claims:

When the speaker's activity is producing stressed syllables is focus, a stressed syllable may be defined in terms of greater effort that enters into the production of a syllable as compared to an unstressed syllable. When stress is defined from the listener's standpoint, the claim is often made that stressed syllables are louder than unstressed syllables.

In this claim, the writer thinks that the definition of stress from its production has to consider the differences between high and low syllables. Furthermore, the definition that considers its perception must focus on its loudness, that is; the listener gets it louder than others.

2.4.2. Phonetic Transcription

In modern life in general and in science in particular, writing has taken an extremely important place. The role of writing is to facilitate the spread of information integrally in any language. Then, linguists have invented symbols that they use in international alphabet so as to make sounds analyzable.

First, the primary stress which is the highest peak of sounds, is phonetically marked by a stroke (') put slightly before and above a stressed syllable. Second, in opposition to primary stress, the unstressed syllable which is produced or articulated with the lowest peak, does not carry any mark. Finally, the secondary stress which is articulated with the middle effort comparatively to other levels is marked by a stroke (') put slightly before and below the stressed syllable. Most

dictionaries use this way to transcribe the words. For instance, we transcribe the following word as: *communication* /kʌ mjʊnɪ'keɪʃən/.

However, there are some few linguists who put the mark (') on the vowel of the stressed syllables. It is the case of Ponsony for instance as we are going to see in his stress rules.

In this study, the focus is the primary stress and the unstressed syllable. We will only consider secondary stress if necessary. The reason for this is that, secondary stress is not easily perceived. Gimson (1980) says what follows:

Nevertheless, the English speaker will normally distinguish really only stressed and unstressed (strong and weak) syllables, to which will correspond the listener's impression of sound and weak syllable.

The stressed and unstressed syllables are easily perceived by the listener. This can make our work possible since we do not have machines that can give little description of sounds otherwise we may have difficulties to perceive secondary stress.

2.5. Importance of Stress in English

As far as English is concerned, stress is a very important element of the oral performance. There are various instances that show it. Stress in English functions as an identity of a word. O'Connor (1980:90) supports this view: "Every word has a definite place for the stress and we are not allowed to change it." In the same sense, Brown (1977:4) supports this view; he says this: "The stress pattern of polysyllabic word is a very important identifying feature of the word." This means that a stress is very necessary for oral English. Speakers of English have to respect it in order to be understood. The reason for this is that a hearer listens to stressed syllables that carry stress in order to perceive a word and finally its meaning.

When the speaker fails to use the right stress, he runs a great risk of losing the identity of the word he is uttering. The wrongly stressed word may not be recognized or get confused with other words of similar syllables. Thus, he fails to communicate effectively. MacGregor (2002:62) recognizes that using the wrong stress can completely change the meaning. Brown (1977:48) notes; ‘ It is difficult to interpret an utterance in which a word was mispronounced with the wrong stress pattern.’ To illustrate this, Brown gives an example of a word mispronounced by one of his students. The word is *animism* generally pronounced /'ænimɪzəm/, but the student said /ə'nɪmɪzəm/. Consequently, the lecturer (Brown) confused the word with ‘anaemia’. This was only due to the misplacement of its stress. In the same sense Odlin (1989:117) supports this opinion by illustrating it with examples from Bansal (1976) and says what follows:

‘diVIision’ was sometimes pronounced ‘DIvision’ and was consequently misperceived by British listeners as Region, and ‘talking among themSEVES’ was sometimes pronounced as ‘taking among THEMselves’ and was consequently misperceived as ‘talking among DAMsels’.

It is obvious that when pronouncing with a wrong stress, there is a great risk of being misperceived by the listener. The utterance or the sentence is misunderstood. According to O’Connor (1980:90), ‘If you stress the wrong syllable, it spoils the shape of the word for an English hearer, he may have difficulties in recognizing the word.’ Then, it is clear that an incorrect stress is a great handicap against effective oral communication.

Poldauf (1984:39) gives pairs of words to which the stress determines the meaning. That is; the meaning changes when the stress moves from a syllable to another as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Stress as the only distinguishing mark of pair words

| Noun | Verb |
|--|---|
| 'accent n[-ent] | ac'cent v |
| 'entail (arrangement about land to son ony) | en'tail (use the aux be in past tenses, on a person,=make necessary) |
| 'impact n[-ækt] | im'pact |
| 'increase and 'decrease n | in'crease and de'crease v |
| 'insult n | in'sult v |
| 'transfer [-fɜ:] | trans'fer |
| 'contest n | con'test v |
| 'conflict n | con'flict v |
| 'interdict n | inter'dict v |
| 'conduct n | con'duct v |
| 'progress n | pro'gress v |
| 'protest n | pro'test v |

To these words in the above table, when the stress is on the first syllable, it indicates that the word is a noun; but when it is on the second syllable, it indicates that the word is a verb.

The importance of stress is also seen in the role it plays in connected speech. In a sentence, stressed and unstressed syllable are arranged in a way that they create a regular beat. Quirt et al (1985:1597) say that the natural rhythm of English is a regular beat [...]. There are no two consecutive stressed syllables in English. MacGregor (2002:62) goes on saying that stress and intonation are the two parts of the music of any language. In our study only stress is focused on.

2.6. Characteristics of Stressed Syllables

All stressed syllables are commonly recognized by their prominence. Roach (1991:85) says: ‘All syllables have one characteristic in common and that is, **prominence**.’ This prominence is given by a number of factors. Katamba (1989:221) distinguishes three factors of an auditory prominence of stress. He says ‘The main phonetic ingredients of stress are PITCH, LENGTH, and LOUDNESS.’ This implies that, a stressed syllable has pitch which is higher, a longer duration and is louder than the non-stressed syllables. Roach (1991:86) extends these characteristics from three to four; he adds **Quality**. He says that prominence is produced by four main factors (i) loudness, (ii) length, (iii) pitch and (iv) quality. For him, pitch and length are more important than others. He says that...the strongest effect is produced by pitch, and length is also a powerful factor. Loudness and quality have much less effect.

2.7. Rules of English Word Stress

English word is governed by a number of rules but some researchers think that they do not exist. For example, Mugaya (2001:69) says that there is no rule that decides on what syllable the stress falls. Many attempts have been made to formulate rules, but all are failures because of huge lists of exceptions that are attached to each. Ponsony (1982:14) proposes the following five rules and illustrates them with words:

- a) Always stress the syllable before one that is pronounced [ʃn] –ssion/-tion, [ʃs]-cious/-tious, [ʃl]-cial/tial, etc, e.g. *attén*tion, *spá*cious, *artíf*cial.
- b) In words ending ‘-ic’ ‘-icial’, ‘-ically’, the stress is on the syllable before ‘-ic’, except *Á*rabic, *arí*thmetic, *lún*atic, *hé*retic, *pó*litics, *rhé*toric, (but adjectives: *arithmé*tic, *heré*tical, *polít*ical, *rheto*rical)

c) A great many words are stressed on the last syllable but two, e.g. *illúminate*, *thermómeter*, *geólogy*, *philósopher*. Words ending in *-‘ólogy’*, *-‘ónomy’*, *-‘ósophy’*, *-‘ólogist’*, etc. always follow this rule.

d) Words ending in *‘-ese’* have the stress on this syllable (*Chinése*, *journalése*).

e) Do not stress the negative prefix attached to an adjective (*póssible*, *impóssible*, *líterate*, *illíterate*) except: *nówhere*, *nóthing*, *nóbody*, *nónsense*.

These rules proposed by Ponsony (1982:14) are somehow not easy to memorize and apply when speaking. Note that all scholars do not have common ways of summarizing rules. In these rules, the writer puts stress on vowels of the stressed syllables, but others put it on the starting sound of the stressed syllable as we saw previously. English Club (2010) in its website gives us another elaborated set of stress rules. These rules are five and are distributed in the following five tables:

Table 2: Stress Rule 1

1⁰ Stress on First Syllable

| Rule | Example |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Most 2-syllable nouns | PREsent, Export, CHIna, Table |
| Most 2-syllable adjectives | PREsent, SLEnder, CLEver, HAPpy |

Table3: Stress Rule 2

2⁰ Stress on Last Syllable

| Rule | Example |
|-----------------------|---|
| Most-2 syllable verbs | To preSENT, to exPORT, to deCIDE, to beGIN |

Table 4: Stress Rule 3**3⁰ Stress on Penultimate Syllable (second from end)**

| Rule | Example |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Words ending in -ic | GRaphic, geoGRaphical |
| Words ending in -sion and -tion | teleVIsion, reLAtion |

Table 5: Stress Rule 4**4⁰ Stress on Ante-Penultimate Syllable (third from end)**

| Rule | Example |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Words ending in -cy, -ty, and -gy | deMOcracy, dendaBility, phoTOgrapy, geOLOgy |
| Words ending in -al | CRItical, geoLOGical |

Table 6: Stress Rule 5**5⁰ Compound Words (Words with two parts)**

| Rule | Example |
|---|-----------------------------|
| For compound words, the stress is on the first part | BLACKbird, GREENhouse |
| For compound adjectives, the stress is on the second part | Bad-TEMpered, old-FASHioned |
| For compound verbs, the stress is on the second part | To underSTAND, to overFLOW |

Looking at these rules, we can see them with a double eye. They have some similarities and dissimilarities. We say that they are similar because there are details found in both, for instance, all two authors talk about place of stress regarding suffixes. On the other side, these rules are dissimilar because there are things found in Ponsony's rules but not in the internet source of the English Club. For instance, only Ponsony talks about stress position regarding prefix of the word, and only the internet source talks about stress position in compound words. For this we assume that they complement each other.

2.7.1. Learning Stress Rules

Schools are domains of learning that make use of rules. As earlier indicated, stress is governed by rules. Scholars do not advise learners of English to rely strongly on stress because of their complexity.

2.7.2. Complex Nature of Stress

English stress patterns are a complex matter. This complexity affects both learners and analysts. This is the reason why it merits special attention. Roach (1991:88) says 'Certainly, anyone who tries to analyse English stress placement has to recognize that it is a highly complex matter.'

To learners (not native speakers), stress patterns are difficult in perception on the one hand and production on the other hand. About perception Bright and MacGregor (1977:188) put: "Most foreign learners find this a very strange feature of English. Their ears tell them that English speakers 'Swallow their words' or 'talk very fast.'" About production, the same scholars say what swallows:

...many foreign speakers find it very hard to get through the unstressed syllables rapidly enough. Sometimes this is because they have given themselves enough time in the first case where there are adjacent heavy



stresses. Sometimes it is because they insist on putting in some intermediate stresses.

The above argument makes it clear that foreign speakers confront difficulties in stresses. It is obvious that learners are in need of learning this aspect with an extra-effort; otherwise, it is difficult to get or achieve good pronunciation or an audible English speech.

2.7.3. Learning through Rules

As earlier indicated, the aspect of stress is complex. Generally, rules should make easier the learning process; but for stress rules some linguists advise that we should not rely on them because there are many exceptions. As far as university students are concerned no point should be neglected. However, when something is difficult, it requires a lot of time and attention by teachers and students. Brown (1977:42)

[...] and very few teaching programmes will find to try to teach students to master anything so difficult. It is however essential that students should be encouraged to be aware of these characteristics. This is because rhythm in English is not just something extra, added to the basic sequence of consonants and vowels; it is the glide to the structure of information in the spoken form.

To learn anything we should look for strategies appropriate to the act of learning. Other linguists propose reading as a proper strategy for learning stress patterns. Reading is a very important strategy in the life of intellectuals in general, and in the life of students in particular. Kwizigira (2011:13) argues: 'For increasing knowledge, students should develop the habit of reading more books because teachers' explanations are not enough. In this way they will get information about everyday life.'

In learning stress, reading is very helpful. It is advised that any moment we get closer to a new word; we should consult a dictionary to study its meaning, its pronunciation as well as its stress pattern. On its website, English Club (2010) suggests the following;

When you learn a new word, you should also learn its stress pattern. If you keep a vocabulary book, make a note to show which syllable is stressed. If you do not know, you can look in dictionary.

The consultation of a dictionary is classified among ‘scanning reading’. It is a frequent method of learning. Kwizigira (2011:17) defines scanning as follows: “scanning is making a rapid overview of a message but this moment looking for specific information”. Students are always advised to read books on their own in order to complete what they are given by their teachers in class. It is because that what is taught in class is always few comparatively to what should be known. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Kwizigira (2011:72) finds out that reading is still not given its due place. Reading in stress should be completed by practice.

2.8. Error Analysis

An error is misuse or deviation from norms of a language by a learner. According to Richards et al (1985:95), an error is the use of a linguistic item (for example a word, a grammatical item, a speech, etc) in a way that a fluent or native speaker of a language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. Error Analysis is a technique or approach consisting of studying errors committed by learners of a language during their process of learning. As we are going to see, errors used to be seen negatively but today we see it with a positive eye.

2.8.1. Attitudes towards Error

As earlier indicated, an error is deviation from what is normally used. Then, it is obvious that an error is badly viewed by the users. Nourish (1983:1) explains:

In many traditional language classes, students have been made feel that errors bring discredit on the teacher and learner alike and have reprimanded for making too many errors. This implies that errors are the fault of the student and could be avoided.

This attitude is bad because it does not facilitate the task of learning. This is because that it brings about fear to the learner. The learner becomes afraid of making an error because it leads him to being laughed at. Then he will not try to speak (or practice) the language in public if he does not have a great risk taking. This will restrain the learner's progress in acquisition. Nourish (1983:1) goes on saying:

Many people will agree that one of the most inhibiting factors in any formal learning situation is fear of making mistakes and being thought ridiculous either by native speakers, one's classmates or by the teacher. This leads to the characteristic hesitancy among learners to say anything in a foreign language for fear appearing a fool.

It is seen that some people view errors and mistakes with a negative eye. However, we should not consider errors with a negative eye because we cannot avoid all errors to learners. We should rather use them in a way that can be helpful to both teachers and students. Make sure that errors show the stage at which a learner is in the process of learning an L2. An error helps to locate the areas of difficulties that a learner is facing. Nourish (1983:1) says that the error itself may actually be a necessary part of learning a language. Niyongabo (2006:18) supports the importance of an error of a learner by

saying: “It can give a picture of a type of difficulty that learners are experiencing.”

As far as a teacher is concerned, error analysis can give useful information about the class. Richards et al (1985:96) cited in Niyongabo (2006:18) give three reasons for error analysis:

- a) To find out how well someone knows a language
- b) To find out how a person learns a language
- c) To obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

The above reasons mean that errors show us the area of weaknesses and their causes; and the errors may be individual or general. Knowing that helps in their correction. Niyongabo (op cit) supports this idea, he states; “the prevention and correction requires a good understanding of the causes of errors.”

2.9. Conclusion

In conclusion, chapter two presents related theories to stress placement. In this part we see various definitions of stress as various researchers view it. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the rules governing this aspect of English. These rules cause a number of problems to foreign learners. We have seen some strategies that linguists propose to learners in order to overcome this situation. The following chapter is concerned with the methodology used to collect and analyze the data under study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter describes the way we followed during data collection and their analysis for this study. With regards to data collection, we describe the area, the subjects as well as sampling methods. Concerning data analysis, we describe the ways followed when analyzing the data collected through reading test and answers from students' as well as lecturers' questionnaires.

3.1. Research Area and Population

This study was conducted in the public University named University of Burundi. Precisely, the study was carried out in the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL). It is one of the five departments that compose the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) in Mutanga Campus.

The University of Burundi is based in Bujumbura city. The University is made up of Faculties and Institutes which are distributed in four campuses in Bujumbura and another campus is in Gitega province, that campus is commonly named 'ZEGE' Campus. Each faculty is in turn made up of departments whose number varies from one to another.

The Department of English Language and Literature is included in the FASS. The DELL is generally made up of four levels: Fresher Level (first year), Sophomore Level (second year), Junior Level (third year), and finally, Senior Level (fourth or last year). Following the newly introduced BMD system, the levels are reduced from four to three.

In order not to make our task too broad, something which would make our task too complex, we have decided to narrow the subjects by choosing the junior and senior levels. In addition, our choice was motivated by the fact that these

students have been in contact with English for a relatively long time. We assume that data collected will be reliable, sincere and therefore be generalizable.

3.2. Sample Selection

3.2.1. Students

In carrying out this research, we decided to select a representative sample that would objectively reproduce the mistakes, views, attitudes or behaviours of the whole population as closely as possible. Then, for the questionnaire, we selected one third ($1/3$) of the students as a representative sample for each class or year. That is; $1/3$ in junior level and $1/3$ in senior level. The students we targeted belong to 2011-2012 academic year.

The third year is populated with 170 students. Then we think that a sample of 57 students can reflect objectively the realities of the whole population. On the other hand, the fourth year is composed of 123 students. A sample of 41 students is able to reproduce or reflect objectively the reality of the whole population.

The researcher wrote on very small pieces of paper the number corresponding to alphabetical order of students as given by the lists of all students level by level. The pieces of paper were shuffled in a basket and selected by picking them randomly. The students' names corresponding to the chosen numbers were contacted to take part in the research.

Table7: Presentation of Population

| Level | Population | Sample |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Junior | 170 | 57 |
| Senior | 123 | 41 |
| Total | 293 | 98 |

3.2.2. Lecturers

Lecturers also took part in the research. We administered questionnaire copies to lecturers of the following courses: Listening, Oral Expression and Phonetic and Phonology, or Practical Phonetics dealt in the DELL. Since they are not many no selection was needed; all of them were contacted for data collection of this work. One is a female and the rest are male. They are six but we consulted only five because the other was supervising this work.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is the crucial stage for any scientific work. It provides materials to be analyzed and afterwards draw conclusions from the findings. In data collection we should be as careful as we can. We Collected data by three main ways: -Reading test-Questionnaire administered to students and another questionnaire administered to lecturers.

3.3.1. Reading Test

Some factors that influence students' stress mistakes cannot be well analyzed without having sentences uttered by students themselves. For this, we randomly selected two texts: each level with its own text. We wrote each of the title on small piece of paper. We shuffled them and asked a person to choose one for each level. The texts were selected among those used in Oral Expression Course in order to avoid mistakes due to unfamiliarity of students with new words. We selected 10 students for each level, that is; 20 students in total. We asked each student to read the text and we tape-recorded the speech for further analysis. We chose the tape-recorder for it helps to collect original data and make it conservable for a long time and can be consulted any time. According to Ladeforged (1983:183) cited in Nishobora (2010:42); "if we want permanent data that we can study, it will often have to be a result of analyzing a tape recording." This is the reason that motivated the choice of tape-recording

3.3.2. Students' Questionnaire

Questionnaires are a set of questions written on piece of paper administered to subjects. It is a translation of the hypotheses into many questions whose answers are useful information for the study. We analyzed the answers or data given by the students in the optic of finding out the causes of stress mistakes. It is an important way for data collection for the study.

3.3.3. Lecturers' Questionnaire

In the same vein, we decided to use lecturers' questionnaire in order to answer our research questions. They help us to gather the views of the lecturers about what they daily experience with students. These views are very important to our study in finding out the causes of stress mistakes.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected were analysed separately according to their methods of collection (level by level). After, we confronted them in order to draw conclusions. That is; at the first position, we analysed data from the recorded reading test (at each level students were submitted to their own text seen in oral expression course), at the second position we analysed data from students' questionnaires, again level by level, and at the last position we analysed data collected from lecturers' questionnaires.

3.5. Problem Encountered

In the course of our research, we encountered many problems. About the test, many students were afraid of being recorded and we were obliged to tranquilize them. About the questionnaires, students were very busy with their academic activities and this lengthened the appointment we had given. We also encountered problems related to our own availability. Often, we missed to

respond to our supervisor's rendezvous due to the lack of transportation fare or the delay in finding the information that he recommended us to bring.

3.6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, chapter three is designed to describe the various methods used in data collection and analysis for this study. At the first position, we describe the research area and the population; the place of the institution's situation and the description of the subjects that were consulted during the process of data collection. At the second position, the chapter deals with the description of the way in which the sample selection was done: numbering and choice of one third as a representative sample. At the last position, we name and explain the three ways used in data collection. The following chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and findings.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATIONS, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter is of paramount importance. It contains analysis of data collected with three instruments. First, it examines examples of mispronounced words collected in the reading test given to students. Second it presents and discusses answers given by students in the questionnaire. Finally, it does the same to answers given by lecturers.

4.1. Data Presentation and Analysis

At this level, we present all the data we collected by use of the three methods, that is; the recorded reading test, students and lecturers' questionnaires. And at the same time we analyse and discuss them.

Data analysis is concerned with studying in detailed ways the data we collected. First, we deal with the data from the reading test, second we tackle the data collected from students' questionnaire and finally from the lecturers' questionnaire.

4.1.1. Presentation and Analysis of Data from the Reading Test

In this section we present in tables wrong stresses of the words we found in the test. We show the word, how it should be stressed and how students have stressed it in a wrong way.

Table 8: Stress Mistake Committed by Students of the Junior Level

| Word | | Right Stress Position | Wrong Stress Position | Students |
|------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Suffrage | SUffrage | suffRAge | 4 |
| 2 | Citizen | Citizen | ciTIzen | 3 |
| 3 | Establish | esTAblish | estaBLish | 4 |
| 4 | Liberty | Llberty | liBERTy | 6 |
| 5 | Downright | DOWNright | downRIGHT | 5 |
| 6 | Supreme | suPREme | SUPpreme | 2 |
| 7 | Government | GOvenment | goVERNment | 5 |
| 8 | Democracy | deMOcracy | -democracy(no 36tress) | 1 |
| | | | -demoCRAcY | 3 |
| 9 | Govern | GOvern | goVERN | 4 |
| 10 | Oligarchy | oLlgarchy | Oligarchy | 3 |
| 11 | Ignorant | lgnorant | igNOrant | 6 |
| 12 | Household | HOUsehold | houseHOLD | 6 |
| 13 | Opponent | opPOnent | Opponent | 4 |
| 14 | Without | withOUT | WIThOut | 1 |
| 15 | Perfect (adj) | PERfect | PerFECT (stress of verb) | 5 |
| 16 | Dissension | disSEnsion | DISsension | 2 |
| 17 | Precisely | preSIzely | PREsisely | 3 |
| 18 | Ordain | orDAIN | Ordain | 1 |
| 19 | Republican | rePUBlican | repuBLIcan | 4 |
| 20 | Presidential | presiDENTIAL | presidenTIAL | 1 |
| 21 | Privilege | PRIVilege | privilege (no stress) | 2 |
| 22 | Federal | FEderal | fedeRAL | 4 |
| 23 | Posterity | postTERity | posteRItY | 3 |

Table 9: Stress Mistake Committed by Students of the Senior level

| Word | Right Stress Position | Wrong Stress Position | Students | |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 24 | Assembly | asSEmblly | ASsembly | 7 |
| 25 | Explicitness | exPLIcitness | explicitness (no stress) | 2 |
| 26 | Political | poLItical | POLitical | 4 |
| 27 | Property | PROperty | proPERty | 2 |
| 28 | Menacing | MENacing | meNACING | 11 |
| 29 | Debate | DEbate | deBAte (tress of verb) | 12 |
| 30 | Capable | CAPable | caPABle | 2 |
| 31 | Success | sucCESS | SUCcess | 9 |
| 32 | Extreme | exTREme | EXtreme | 2 |
| 33 | Absurd | abSURD | Absurd | 2 |
| 34 | Limits | Limits | limits (no tress) | 1 |
| 35 | Opinion | oPIinion | Opinion | 2 |
| 36 | Consequences | CONsequences | conseQUENCES | 4 |
| 37 | Memorable | MEMorable | memoRABle | 6 |
| 38 | Maintainance | MAIntainance | maintainence (no tress) | 3 |
| 39 | Divergencies | diVERgencies | diverGENCies | 5 |
| 40 | Beset | beSET | BEset | 2 |
| 41 | Conflict | CONflict | conFLICT (tress of verb) | 3 |
| 42 | Conscience | CONscience | conSCIence | 2 |
| 43 | Aspect | ASpect | asPECT | 1 |
| 44 | Influence | Influence | inFLUence | 3 |
| 45 | Accomplish | acCOMplish | accomPLISH | 8 |
| 46 | Deceit | deCEIT | DEceit | 3 |
| 47 | Denial | deNIAL | DEnial | 2 |
| 48 | Headquarters | HEADquarters | headQUArtres | 5 |
| 49 | Diplomatic | diploMATIC | diPLOmatic | 7 |
| 50 | Courageous | couRAgeous | COUrageous | 6 |
| 51 | Inherent | inHERent | Inherent | 4 |
| 52 | Spiritual | SPIritual | spiRItual | 6 |
| 53 | Contemporal | conTEMPoral | CONtemporal | 2 |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|
| 54 | Economic | ecoNOmic | eCOmic | 8 |
| 55 | Preceding | preCEding | PREceding | 2 |
| 56 | Compelling | comPELling | COMpelling | 6 |
| 57 | Necessary | NEcessary | necesSary | 5 |
| 58 | Committee | comMIttee | COMmittee | 2 |
| 59 | Endeavored | enDEAvored | endeaVOred | 5 |
| 60 | Outstanding | outSTAnding | OUTstanding | 4 |
| 61 | Trusteeship | trustEEship | trusteeSHIP | 8 |
| 62 | Progress | proGRESS | PROgress | 7 |
| 63 | Dictates | DICtates | dicTates | 6 |

In this study, we used a recorded reading test given to students in order to see how they use stress of English. The test consists of two texts randomly selected from others used in the course of Oral Expression. One text was for the junior level and the other text was for the senior level, we selected ten students for each level. The data collected here show that students of both levels have troubles regarding the use of stress of English. This means that their speech flow does not respect stress patterns. The analysis of data collected shows that various kinds of mistakes committed by students. These mistakes are due to many factors as shown below.

Students interchange stresses of words. As said in chapter two; stress position in a word can be an indication of its grammatical category, that is; a verb, a noun or an adjective. To such words, some students interchange and confuse stress of a verb with that of a noun or with that of an adjective. Listening to such a speech one gets great difficulties to distinguish words and consequently to understand such a speech becomes a hard task. In the test, mistakes of this kind were found in words such as, for instance; perfect, dictates, conflict and record.

Table 10: Interchange of Stress of Words

| Word | Right Stress Position | Wrong Stress Position | Students |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Perfect (adj.) | PERfect/'pɜ:fɪkt/ | perFECT/pə'fekt/ | 5 |
| Conflicts (noun) | CONflicts/'kɒnflɪkt/ | conFLICTS/kən'flɪkt/ | 3 |
| Dictates (noun) | DICtates/'dɪktetɪz/ | dicTAtes/dɪk'tetɪz/ | 3 |

The word *perfect* is an adjective in the text. The stress is, therefore, on its first syllable *per-*. When the word is a verb, its stress falls on its second syllable: *-fect*. However, 5 of 10 students did not respect this rule. In fact, they have uttered the word with the stress of the verb instead of that of the adjective. The same phenomenon appears to words: conflicts and dictates 3 out of 10 students uttered with stresses of verbs whereas they are nouns. This is caused by the fact that students over generalise the rule already known instead of studying it word - by-word. This would help students to pronounce the word as it should for good intelligibility.

The overgeneralization does not limit itself to these words only. It also happens to other words such as nouns, compound words, etc. Students have great tendency of making reference to other words already known, and haphazardly stress the wrong syllables. For instance, these compound words were mispronounced as follows, *downright*, 5 students uttered it as *downRIGHT* instead of *DOWNright*, *consequence* was said by 4 students uttered it as *conseQUENCE* in place of *CONsequence*. This word is wrongly assimilated to other words whose prefix is con- which is generally not stressed.

The French background of students influences students' English speech. These kinds of mistakes are found in the pronunciation of cognates; (a word in one language with the same meaning and form because those languages are

interrelated); which students pronounce in the French or Kirundi way rather than the English. The following table shows it:

Table 11: Incorrect Stress due to French Interference

| Word | Right Stress Position | Wrong Stress Position |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Merit | MErit/'merit/ | meRIT /merit/ |
| assembly | asSEmblly/ə'sembli/ | ASsembly/'asambli/ |
| memorable | MEMorable/'memərəbl/ | memoRABle/memə'rebl/ |
| Liberty | LIberty/'libəti/ | liBERty/li'bɜ:ti/ |
| accomplish | acCOMplish/ə'kʌmplɪʃ/ | AccomPLISH/əkəm'plɪʃ/ |
| Limit | LImit/'lɪmɪt/ | liMIT/lɪ'mɪt/ |
| aristocracy | ariSTOcracy/æris'tɒkrəsi/ | aristoCRACy/əristə'krəsi/ |
| oligarchy | Oligarchy/'ɒlɪgɑ:ki/ | oliGARchy/ə'lɪgɑ:ki/ |

The analysis of these mistakes in the above table indicates that they originate from French interference. Stress is unnecessarily moved to another syllable due to French background of students. The apparent consequences are stress movement, sound and rhythm change. They refer to French as well as Kirundi.

English and Kirundi do not share all the sounds. Ntahokaja (1994:9) says: “Sur le plan linguistique, le Kirundi emploie cinq voyelles orales...” translated as follows; translated as: “Linguistically speaking, Kirundi uses five oral vowels...” (my translation). He goes on giving us those vowels: i, e, a, o, u. There are sounds which are present English but absent in Kirundi. Niyongabo (2006:38) distinguishes the vowel sounds like ə,..., diphthongs like eɪ, ai, eə etc, triphthongs like eɪə, aiə etc.

Therefore, students fail to pronounce well some English sounds like the schwa ə in the word the word *opponent* /ə'pəʊnənt/. This word was rather pronounced by 4 of 10 students as /'ɒpənənt/. They replaced ə this sound with Kirundi sound

/o/p/ which are closer to it. This sound change affects stress patterns of this word; the stress was moved backward from its right syllable -po- to the first syllable -op- starting with the schwa sound which they transformed in another sound ɒ. Normally, a syllable that carries the schwa sound is never stressed (it is a rule). However some students replace the sound and stress that syllable.

Example; Unstressed syllables in English are uttered with a lower pitch. In contrast, to some students, it is not the case. They produce stressed and unstressed syllables quite at same pitch. Consequently, the word and speech lose respectively shape and rhythm of English language and sound like Kirundi.

4.1.2. Presentation and Analysis of Data from Students' Questionnaire

Question 1.a; The English language makes use of stress in its pronunciation.

Where were you introduced to this aspect for the first time?

Secondary School

University

Table 12: Presentation of Data related to where stress was firstly introduced to students

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Secondary School | 23 | 11 | 34 | 34.70 |
| University | 34 | 30 | 64 | 65.30 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

This table indicates that, 34 students of 98 were introduced to stress aspect in secondary school, that is; 34.70%. The rest, that is; 64 students equal to 65.30% for the first time studied stress at the university level. This situation implies that stress patterns are a neglected aspect in secondary school. It is only in the university that the aspect is given special attention. Then, this will surely have a negative impact on the mastery of stress patterns by students.

Question 1.b): Other(s), specify:

To this question, no student has indicated any other possible institution where he might have been introduced to stress patterns as a lesson for the first time. Since there are today many English clubs teaching this language, the researcher wanted to see if any students have studied the aspect anywhere else than the two mentioned places in the preceding question. However no other place was indicated by the respondents.

Question 2: At that time, were you interested in this particular aspect of the English language? Yes No I do not remember

Table 13: Presentation of Data related to their Interest in Stress

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 33 | 33 | 66 | 67.34 |
| Non | 18 | 6 | 24 | 24.50 |
| I do not remember | 6 | 2 | 8 | 8.16 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

As reflected in the above table, only 67.34 % said that they were interested by the study of stress. This percentage is high but it does not satisfy us. Generally all the students should be interested. Others 24.48% did not have interest in the topic. Then we cannot master a subject without being interested in it. The rest, that is; 8.16% said that they have no memory of it.

Question 3: How do you consider the use of stress for oral communication in the English language? Not necessary Necessary Very necessary

Table 14: Presentation of Data related to their View on Stress Necessity

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Not necessary | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Necessary | 21 | 11 | 32 | 32.65 |
| Very necessary | 36 | 30 | 66 | 67.35 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

This table shows that none of the students said that it is not necessary. Among the respondents, 32.65% view it as a necessary and 67.35% as a very necessary.

This students' view about stresses is already an advantage towards success in pronunciation learning. However, the percentages do not satisfy the researcher's curiosity. He wished to have all students know it as a very necessary point. But 32.65% do not see it as such. It is not the same case to role played by stress in English. O'Connor (1980:90) says that, "If you stress the wrong syllable it spoils the shape of the world for an English hearer and he may have difficulty in recognizing the world."

Question 4: Stress position within a word or within sentence is governed by a number of rules. Do you know these rules? Yes No Some

Table15: Presentation of Data related to Knowledge of Stress Rules

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 6 | 12 | 18 | 18.37 |
| No | 17 | 5 | 22 | 22.45 |
| Some | 34 | 24 | 58 | 59.18 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

Throughout this table, we notice that, 18.37% said they know the rules. This percentage is too low. We see that 22.45% said that they ignored completely the rules. This is a critical situation. For 59.18% said that they only know some of the rules. It is clear that in order to improve the knowledge and mastery of stress, a special action is needed.

Question 5.a: How do you consider these rules?

Easy Difficult Very difficult

Table16: Presentation of answers to question 5

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Easy | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4.08 |
| Difficult | 37 | 34 | 71 | 72.45 |
| Very difficult | 18 | 5 | 23 | 23.47 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

In this question, the researcher wanted to know the students' appreciation of stress. The table reflects that, only 4.08% see it as an easy matter. The rest view it with another eye: that is; 72.45% see it as difficult and 23.47% as very difficult. This leads to the fact that, very few will have courage to personal studies of difficult things. It is known that the notes given by teachers in class are not enough. They should be completed by personal readings.

Question 5. b. Others (Specify);**Presentation of Data related to other Specificities**

- it depends upon the type and length of the word(3 students)
- it depends on context of use(3 students)
- the age of the learner(1 student)
- different dialects complicates tem more(8 students)
- the fact that English has many accents and dialects, it complicates stress more(2 students)

The above arguments of students also support the idea that stress is difficult, and we see that students are aware of that. We assume that this awareness can have a negative impact on the learning of stress to less courageous learners. Such students do not make a particular effort in learning something difficult.

Question 6: If difficult (or very difficult), do you think that learners can do something and succeed to improve on this particular aspect of English language?

Yes No

Table 17: Presentation of Data related to their View about the Existence of Possibilities for Improvement

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 49 | 37 | 86 | 90.52 |
| No | 7 | 2 | 9 | 9.47 |
| Total | 56 | 39 | 95 | 100 |

This table indicates that the 90.48% of our subjects agree with the researcher that it is possible for students to undertake strategies and be successful to the

improvement of stress mastery for their English speech. This is an advantage since the rate is high. However, 9.47 % do not see any strategies to take in order to overcome these difficulties. For them, the improvement in stress is impossible. This is an inhibition to the English learning. There is a need to make students aware that it is rather possible to improve stress mastery since it plays a great role in oral communication.

Question 7: Do you like reading books related to phonetics?

Yes

No

Table 18: Presentation of Data related to their Reading in Phonetic Materials

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 26 | 24 | 50 | 51.02 |
| No | 31 | 17 | 48 | 48.97 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

We see that only 51.02% of the students are interested in reading linguistic materials and 48.97% do not like reading such books. We know that linguistic materials are extremely important in language learning in general and for university students in particular. It is surprising that such a percentage of students neglect such important works. This is surely a big handicap to the learning and acquisition of language in general and stress patterns in particular.

Question 8.a: If yes, do you target books or chapters related to stress?

Yes

No

Table19: Presentation of Data related to their Target of Stress Readings

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 18 | 11 | 29 | 58 |
| No | 8 | 13 | 21 | 42 |
| Total | 26 | 24 | 50 | 100 |

This question was asked in order to know that among those interested in linguistics, who really study stress patterns. Then only 50 students who responded by yes to the previous question were targeted. Then 58% of them target stress and 42% do not. Then, 29 of 98 read about stress, that is; a very low rate of 29.59% .We notice that stress materials do not attract attention of students in general.

Question 8.b. Other (s); specify:

Here students gave various arguments or reasons which are behind that non interest:

- lack of time and books of Linguistics (12 students)
- there is no need to read such books since dictionaries are available (8 students)
- novels are more interesting than linguistics and stress (4 students)
- stress is difficult to the extent that I do not dare no reading it (1 students)
- assigned teaching programme and life conditions do not permit readings not recommended by teachers (10 students)
- I hate linguistics to the extent that I do not dare touching such a book paying attention to teachers pronunciation is sufficient (1 student)
- while checking, We are hurry, looking at stress will waste time (8 students)
- We are more interested in meaning and sounds than in stress (9 students)

- For me, new words only can be checked (1student)

The above reasons show that students have many problems in leaning Linguistics. Some of these problems are due to lack of time which is evoked by many previous researchers, lack of books, etc. But the most dangerous is the lack of interest.

Question 9. a. When you are consulting dictionaries for the meaning of words, how many times do you remember to check its stress patterns (stressed and unstressed syllables)?

Always Sometimes Never

Table 20: Presentation of Data Related to their Check of Stress when looking for Meaning in Dictionaries

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Total | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Always | 6 | 11 | 17 | 17.34 |
| Sometimes | 48 | 27 | 75 | 76.53 |
| Never | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6.12 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

As reflected in the above table, 17.34% said that whenever they check meaning in dictionary, they always check also the stress patterns of the word under study. This rate is too low. Others, that is; 76.53% said that they sometimes do. And 6.12% never do it. Checking stress of words does not concern them at all. This situation must be changed so as to achieve good pronunciation of English. The reason is this; stress is not an extra-added as one's wants. It should be studied as well as other aspects of the English language.

Question 9. b. Other (s); specify

To this question not many answers have been indicated 14 students gave their options. Below are condensed opinions of 14 students:

- They check stress patterns only when the word is strange or totally new
They do not have time for stress
- They forget or ignore it
- Phonetic features are given importance than stress
- Dictionaries do not show it clearly

These answers give above show that stress patterns are a neglected aspect even if many have recognised the importance of stress in a speech in question 3 where no one said that stress could be an aspect which is not necessary. Students know that stress is important but they do not put much time to it due to reasons they supply in the above question.

Question10. a) If you also study the stress patterns of words, do you try to practise its pronunciation with an effort of respecting its stress patterns?

Yes No I do it but not always

Table 21: Presentation of Data related to their Personal Practice with Respect of Stress during Dictionary Consultation

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 12 | 15 | 27 | 27.55 |
| No | 6 | 3 | 9 | 9.18 |
| I do it but not always | 39 | 23 | 62 | 63.26 |
| Total | 54 | 39 | 93 | 100 |

This table indicates that 27.55% responded positively (yes), and 9.18% responded negatively whereas many students (a percentage of 63.26) practise word pronunciation in an irregular way. This is a big handicap towards pronunciation accuracy. It is not possible to become able to pronounce

accurately if there is no personal practice for new words either in sounds or stress.

Question 10.b. Other (s); specify:

Two responds have given the following problems encountered by students when dealing with pronunciation:

- I do but fail to overcome Kirundi and French influences
- we find it difficult and get discouraged to continue

These views of our respondents are answers to our first and second research questions which pose respectively the existence of language interference and the difficult nature of stresses. In many cases language interference occurs and sometimes is unavoidable. Also many students abandon stress patterns thinking that they are difficult. They should make an effort because no matter how difficult stresses are, there are strategies to undertake and be successful.

Question 11. a. Have you ever consulted any dictionary of pronunciation?

Yes

No

Table 22: Presentation of Data related to their consultation of Dictionarie of Pronunciation

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Total | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 36 | 22 | 58 | 59.18 |
| No | 21 | 19 | 40 | 40.82 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

This table reflects that only 59.18% said that they have consulted a dictionary of this kind, and 40.82% have never consulted such a dictionary. The reason may be the fact that, the main library of the University of Burundi is not rich in dictionaries of pronunciation of English. We know that, in the study of

pronunciation, such dictionaries are of paramount importance. Not consulting any dictionaries of pronunciation has negative consequences on the acquisition of English pronunciation.

Question 11.b.Other (s); specify:

- these dictionaries are rare in our libraries and market (8 students)
- there are other available more important dictionaries (4students)
- the pronunciation needs to be reinforced so that students pay more attention to it (1student)
- we ignore the existence of such books (15students)

Dictionaries of pronunciation are important but are not available in our country. And even the few dictionaries which are available in the main campus library are not used by all or as many students as possible.

Question 12: Do you like speaking English outside the class?

Yes

No,

Table 23: Presentation of Data related to their speaking of English outside the Classroom

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Total | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 54 | 39 | 93 | 94.90 |
| No | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5.10 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

The table shows that 94.90% speak English outside classes while 5.10% do not. Looking at these answers, it is seen that students like speaking English. This is an advantage. Previous studies have shown the contrast. Even if the percentage is high, it does not mean that their practice is effective at 100 percent. One may say one or two sentences to his mate or mates and switch to Kirundi.

Furthermore, not all students are interested in speaking the language. It would be better if all students speak English in and outside the classes for their practice.

Question 13: When speaking with your mates, do you correct each others' mistakes for mutual help in the process of learning? Yes No

Table 24: Presentation of Answers related to their Mutual Correction

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Total | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 52 | 35 | 87 | 88.78 |
| No | 5 | 6 | 11 | 11.22 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

In the process of Learning, mistakes are unavoidable. Continuous correction either by teacher or peer (peers) is required among many other helpful strategies. This question was asked to check if peer correction is used among students. We found out that 88.77% learn by peer correction, but 11.22% ignore that method of learning.

Question 14: When you are speaking English, do you think that your speech respects the appropriate stress patterns?

Yes No I do not know

Table 25: Presentation of Data related to their Thoughts about their correctness of Stress in their Speech

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 15 | 16 | 31 | 31.63 |
| No | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20.40 |
| I do not know | 32 | 15 | 47 | 47.96 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

The table shows that, only 31.63% think that they speak English with the appropriate stress patterns. Others (20.40%) confirm that they do not; while a high percentage of 47.96 said that they are ignorant about stress respect in their own speeches. This simply means that stress is neglected because in question 9 only 17.34 % always check stress patterns in dictionaries.

Question 15.a) Do you still have some difficulties when listening to an English speech? Yes No

Table 26: Presentation of Data related to the Persistence of Difficulties while Listening to English

| Answers | Junior Level | Senior Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 46 | 32 | 78 | 79.60 |
| No | 11 | 9 | 20 | 20.40 |
| Total | 57 | 41 | 98 | 100 |

The table indicates that a high rate of students have difficulties when listening to an English speech. That is; a percentage of 79.60; while 20.40% responded by 'no'. It is clear that when a listener has problems to perceive stressed and unstressed syllables or distinguish them one from another, there is no way he can be a good English listener.

Question: 15. b. If no, why?

Presentation of Data related to other Specificities in Question 15.b.

The following are reasons having no problems as given by respondents:

- it depends on the speaker; listening to a non native speaker causes no problems but listening to native speaker does(6 students)

- good training in class and much other studies through reading(1 student)
- listening to BBC a lot(4 students)
- usual exchange with native speakers(1student)

Some students say that they do not have difficulties to listen to an English speech. In their opinion, they are helped by the above strategies but they are very few. It is true; many exercises in listening and other opportunities like talking with to native speakers play a great role in improving. However, not all students like listening to BBC or get the opportunity to exchange with native speakers of English.

4.1.3. Presentation and Analysis Data from Lecturers' Questionnaire

Question 1 a) The English language makes use of stress in its pronunciation. Do Burundi students face difficulties with stress patterns? Yes No

To this question all the consulted lecturers (5 of 5) responded by yes. They agreed with the researcher that Burundi students have difficulties regarding stressing syllables in the English language.

Question 1 b. If no, why?

To this question no answer was given. All the lecturers have responded with yes. There were not any other opposite answers.

Question2. a) When students are speaking in class, do their speech respect stress patterns? Yes No

Answers collected to this question are presented as follows: 1 said yes; 3 said no; and 1 did not answer it but decided to give his (her) opinion in b.

These responses show that students' speeches swing from correct to incorrect use of stress. The outcome is that good communication is handicapped.

Question 2.b: If no, why?

These are various answers that were given:

- Sometimes they use correct stress patterns, sometimes they do not. The difficulty they face is that they speak using reference to Kirundi and French
- They sometimes do
- They do not respect stress patterns all the time. Sometimes they put the stress on the wrong syllable. They are not always aware of the location of stress on a given syllable within a word.
- Their speech does not respect stress patterns because most students have trouble using stress accurately.

There are various answers that were given. Reading the above answers given by lecturers, it is understandable that correctness in stress use among students is still unachieved. The researcher is glad the lecturers have already seen the problem because it is said: '*Knowing the disease is half the cure*'.

Question 3.a) Stress position within a word or within a sentence is governed by a number of rules. How do you consider these rules for Burundi students?

Easy Difficult Very difficult

The answers are given as follows: none sees it as easy, 2 out of 5 see it as difficult and 3 of 5 as very difficult.

Question 3.b) One said that it depends on the level because stress is unpredictable for new words.

Looking at the above proposed strategies, we see that they require much time and concentration. Example, reading books and listening to media, etc; and it is a tiring task. Even though the task is hard, students should apply the strategies in order to achieve good use of stress part pronunciation since it said: *'You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs'* or *'No pain, no gain'*

Question 6.a) If you teach Phonetics and Phonology; are the students interested in stress? Yes No

The concerned lecturers are two. One said yes and another said no. It means that some students are interested and others are not. We expect both to be interested, but it is not the case. As there are many courses' interests vary from one to another, but no matter what each student's motivation is oriented to, pronunciation cannot be replaced since it involves all. This is because language is primarily spoken.

Question 6.b) If yes, what are the reasons you think are behind this?

The reasons given here are:

- It is an occasion /opportunity to improve their pronunciation by using or putting the stress on the right syllable to avoid any misunderstanding or miscommunication.
- Stress may be difficult because they can occur at initial position or medial position or final position.
- They may also shift depending on the structure of a given word used with various suffixes

The arguments mentioned above can be interpreted as follows: First, the interest originates from will to communicate effectively. Second, the difficulties caused by the unpredictable position of stress for all words create a curiosity to certain

students. They become eager to deeply know even if the rules are complicated to same extent.

Question 7: If you teach listening, are you satisfied with the students' listening ability? Yes No

The targeted lecturers were three. One of them answered by Yes (this lecturer is satisfied), and two said No (they are not satisfied).

The given answers show that 2/3 lecturers are not satisfied with the listening capacity of students. It means that students are still weak at Listening. There are many causes of this among which the researcher thinks that non-mastery of stress may be one.

Question 8.a) If no, do you think that the non-distinction (bad perception) of stressed and unstressed syllables is among the main causes?

Yes No

Among the three concerned lecturers, two responded positively, that is, misperception of stressed and unstressed syllable is one of the main handicaps to good students' listening. Another does not see it as such, and gives his opinion in question b. In any case we know that in listening, if anyone fails to perceive well stressed syllables, he cannot be a good listener.

Question 8.b): Other (s); specify:

The other reason given is that:

- They lack familiarity with spoken English

To this question, an important reason is given; that is, 'lack of familiarity with English'. This idea implies the fact that English is not frequently used in Burundi in general and by Burundi students in particular. It is mostly spoken in class. This situation does not help the acquisition of English, especially the mastery of its subtle details such as stress. They do not have much opportunity of practicing the language in daily life. The outcome will necessarily be inhibiting. They should create or participate in English clubs in order to have more opportunities because it is said: '*Practice makes perfect*'.

4.2. Findings

The findings are the outcome or the results of a study. This study is carried out on the following three hypotheses:

1. French and Kirundi interference is the cause of many stress mistakes among Burundi students
2. The complex nature of stress patterns does not facilitate learning and students lose interest in learning this aspect
3. Burundi students of the Department of English Language Literature do not have the reading culture, and do not know that the library contains books that may help in improving the pronunciation of English, including stress patterns.

After the analysis of all data we found out that all hypotheses were confirmed. This is illustrated below:

4.2.1. Findings from the Reading Test

The results from the recorded reading test confirmed our first hypothesis. The test was given in order to collect various mistakes that students make. This test was used in the study just to look for reliable data to answer the research which is: " To what extent does language interference cause misuse of word stress?"

We found out that many words are mispronounced with reference to French and others to Kirundi. This is shown in table 10 which contains a number of words whose stresses were wrongly moved from syllables to others by students. Listening to the way they are uttered, one may think that they are French words or others Kirundi ones depending on the way they are articulated. See for example the words *merit* and *assembly* were pronounced with stress typically modeled to their French cognates. In addition, Kirundi influence is also a reality in the production of incorrect stress. This is due to the fact that the rhythms of English and Kirundi are different; but students speak English with a rhythm which is similar to that of their L1 and fail to stress the right syllables. This happened to word *democracy*, where some students did not put any stress and it sounded something between Kirundi and French.

4.2.2. Finding from Students' Questionnaire

The answers given by students led us to conclude that our second and third research questions were confirmed. The second research question formulated as: Does the complexity of stress rules have any negative impact on students' attitudes in the learning of the stress patterns?

The complex nature of stress patterns does not facilitate learning and students lose interest in learning this aspect. This is shown by the responses that were given to the question 2, 5.a, and 14. In the answers given to the question 2 (in table 13) many students did not have interest at the very first introductory stress lessons, that is; 24.50% and 8.16% did not remember that. This implies that all 32.65% did not have interest. We can assume that it is impossible to master a subject you do not like.

There are students who ignore stress rules. We see it in table 15 where 22.45% admit their ignorance about the rules and 59.18% say that they know only some. This makes a total of 81.63%. Others see these rules as complicated and stop

studying them. It is clear that the students without courage will stop studying them. They themselves acknowledge it in question 8.b. For example, one student said: “Stresses are difficult to the extent that I do not dare reading them.” Others ignore whether their speech respects or not the stress patterns. We see it in answers to question 14; only 31.63% think that their speech respects stress patterns. 20.41% know that their speeches do not respect stress patterns at all, and more than 47.96% ignore what happens in their speeches regarding stress patterns.

The third research question which intended to know how far do students read materials related to word stress was also answered. There are students do not like linguistics. In the table 18, 48.98% say that reading phonetic materials is not in their interest. And among 51.02% who like reading books related to linguistics, only 58% like reading chapters related to stress. Thus, stress attracts interest of few students, that is, only 29.59% of all the 98 subjects. In addition this research question was also answered in question 9.a in table 20 where not all students check the stress of new words in dictionaries. They only look for meaning, and in question 11.a. in table 22, where 40.82% have never consulted any dictionary of pronunciation. Stress patterns do not attract interest of the students even though they recognize its importance in question 3 as displayed in table14.

4.2.3. Findings from Lecturers’ Questionnaire

Data collected from Lecturers’ Questionnaire answered the research question 1 and 2. The first research question regarding the French and Kirundi interference was confirmed. In question 2.b, the lecturers have noticed that students’ speech suffer from Kirundi and French influence. *This is one of the various causes of these mistakes: ‘sometimes they use correct stress patterns; sometimes do not. The difficulty they face is that they speak using reference to Kirundi and French.’* This view agrees with what we found in the analysis of the data from

the recorded reading text where many words were produced with an accent of French or Kirundi. Stresses were displaced from their habitual syllables.

The research question was also answered by the data collected here. That is, in question 3.a. The question was intended to collect the views of lectures about rules of stress to Burundi students. Then 3/5 lecturers see these rules as difficult and 2/5 see them as very difficult. In addition, students do not have required interest in stress at all.

4.3. Conclusion

In a nutshell, this chapter is concerned with data presentation, analysis as well as findings. The data we analyzed were data collected by use of recorded reading test, questionnaires administered to students on one hand and to lecturers on the other. The data confirmed the three hypotheses we disclosed at the beginning of the study. The test has shown that students still have not yet overcome French and Kirundi interferences as well as the overgeneralization of rules. The answers given by both students and lectures agree with the fact that stress patterns are complicated a matter, and Burundi students find it very difficult. Furthermore, many of them do not have interest in linguistics in general and in stress patterns in particular. Books related to such topics are neglected; some even ignore the existence of them like dictionary of pronunciation. At last, lecturers have noticed the mistakes and support the idea that stress is difficult, and that interference is the cause behind a number of mistakes committed by students.

CHAPTER V: GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with conclusion of the whole work. It also provides recommendations to the students, lecturers, university authorities, the government and future researchers.

5.1. Conclusion

The work is articulated into five chapters: General Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings, and finally General Conclusion and findings.

General Introduction focuses on the background, statement of the problem, the hypotheses, and the motivation of the study. The spread of English around the world has gained Burundi. The way English is learned in Burundi is not facilitated by the linguistic environment prevailing in the country especially the linguistic homogeneity. Kirundi and French are the languages more used than English and Kiswahili. In fact, learners do not have much time or opportunities to use English. The study was carried out in the Department of English Language and Literature where English is used as medium of instruction not as a subject like many other departments or schools. The study was motivated by the fact that the students commit stress errors and the study was conducted in order to find out their causes. The study intended propose possible solutions in an order to overcome those problems. The study is articulated on the following three research questions:

1. To what extent does language interference cause the misuse of the English word stress?
2. To what extent the complex nature of stress rules hamper students' motivation for improvement?

3. How far do students read materials related to English word stress patterns?

The investigation was made in order to get answers to the above research questions. It is good to make a recall of our topic:

“FACTORS THAT AFFECT BURUNDI STUDENTS’ USE OF ENGLISH WORD STRESS: A CASE STUDY OF THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR LEVEL STUDENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI”

Literature Review chapter is concerned with what scholars have done within the field. It deals with definitions of stress. It scrutinizes the nature and role of stress in English language, as well as some of the stress rules.

Methodology, which is the third chapter, describes the how we proceeded in data collection. In this section, there is description of sampling method, the area, the process and techniques used to collect and analyse data. The study used a reading test, questionnaires administered one to students randomly selected, another to lecturers of Oral Expression, Listening and Phonetics Courses.

Data presentation analysis and findings is the fourth chapter. In this part, all our research questions were satisfactory answered as shown below:

Firstly, the research question one, whose intention was to find out the impact of language interference, was confirmed by the results from the recorded reading test. A great number of words were pronounced with an accent of French and others with an accent of Kirundi. This caused an incorrect shift of stress within syllables. In addition, the research question was answered by answers to question 2.b, (in the lecturers’ questionnaire), where lecturers admitted that they have noticed language interference in the use of stress patterns. About many other words students ignore the rules of stress shift.

The second research question was also answered a satisfactory way. We found out that students know stress rules as a complicated matter. For instance in question 5 a, 8 b, in (the students' questionnaire) and this was also supported by question 3 (a and b), and 6 (b). These questions focus on the difficult nature of stress. This has a negative impact on less courageous students and on those who are interested in other fields than linguistics. Also, linguistics lecturers have noticed the students' lack of interest in the study of stress. Even some students who afford it sometimes fail to overcome some problems.

Furthermore, the last research question was answered. It was answered by question 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11(a and b). We discovered that very few students are interested in phonetics and stress, that is; readings dealing with stress patterns are rarely done. In a nutshell, all findings confirmed the hypotheses. This situation led us to formulate the following recommendations for good learning and acquisition of the stress patterns of the English language.

5.2. Recommendations

In the light of our findings, a number of recommendations are addressed to various stakeholders in the education process. The recommendations are directed to the students, lecturers, university authorities, to the ministry of education and to the future researchers.

5.2.1. To Students

Students should develop learning strategies which can help in the mastery of stress patterns instead of being discouraged. Student should always check stress patterns of any word whenever checking its meaning in dictionaries. They should also make particular effort to listen to native speakers as much as possible like in the media using English (BBC, VOA,). They should create opportunities of speaking English.

5.2.2. To Lecturers

Since lecturers are the main guiders of students, they should give more opportunities and assignments of talking. They should advise and oblige students to read linguistic materials. They should help students create English Clubs.

5.2.3. To University Authorities

They should make an effort to buy more books for the library. They should think about extending the stay abroad the country of students for the linguistic immersion to reduce considerably the lack English familiarity with students.

5.2.4. To the Ministry of Education

They should review the English programme taught in secondary school by inserting stress patterns in order to empower students in speaking at early age.

5.2.5. To the Future researchers

The work is limited itself to the DELL, future researchers should carry out similar study in other English departments like in Institute of Applied Pedagogy (IAP) and in Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS).

This chapter summarizes the whole work in few words from. It gives an overview of what has been done in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire

Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Burundi
Tel: 79705016/76705016

November....., 2012

Dear Student,

I am a student carrying out a research on the topic **“Factors that Affect Burundi Students’ Use Of English Word Stress: A Case Study of The Junior and Senior Level Students of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi”** in attempt to get the BA degree in English Language and Literature.

I crave your indulgence to collaborate in the realization of this project.

I guarantee and pledge confidentiality. A questionnaire is attached.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Pierre Ngabirano

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

TICK THE RIGHT ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OR COMPLETE IN THE BLANKS IF NECESSARY.

1. a) The English language makes use of stress in its pronunciation. Where were you introduced to this aspect for the first time?

Secondary School

University

b) Other(s), Specify:

.....

2. At that time, were you interested to this particular aspect of the English language?

Yes

No

I do not remember

3. How do you consider the use of stress for oral communication in the English language?

Not necessary

Necessary

Very necessary

4. Stress position within a word or within sentence is governed by a number of rules. Do you know these rules?

Yes

No

Some

5. a) How do you consider these rules?

Easy

Difficult

Very difficult

b) Other(s); specify.....

.....

6. If difficult (or very difficult), do you think that learners can do something and succeed to improve on this particular aspect of English language?

Yes No

7. Do you like reading books related to phonetics?

Yes No

8.a) If yes, do you target books or chapters related to stress?

Yes No

b.)Other(s),specify:.....
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9. a) When you are consulting dictionaries for the meaning of words, how many times do you remember to check its stress patterns(stressed and unstressed syllables)?

Always Sometimes Never

b)Other(s),specify:.....
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10. a) If you also study the stress patterns of words, do you try to practise its pronunciation with an effort of respecting its stress patterns?

Yes No I do it but not always

b)Other(s),specify:.....
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11.a)Have you ever consulted any dictionary of pronunciation?

Yes No

b)Other(s),specify:.....
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12. Do you like speaking English outside the class?

Yes No

13. When speaking with your mates, do you correct each others' mistakes for mutual help in the process of learning?

Yes No

14. When you are speaking English, do you thing that your speech respects the appropriate stress patterns?

Yes No I do not know

Appendix 2: Lectures' Questionnaire

Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Burundi
Tel: 79705016/76705016

November....., 2012

Dear Lecturer,

I am a student carrying out a research on the topic **“Factors that Affect Burundi Students’ Use Of English Word Stress: A Case Study of The Junior and Senior Level Students of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi ”** in attempt to get the BA degree in English Language and Literature.

I crave your indulgence to collaborate in the realization of this project.

I guarantee total confidentiality. A questionnaire is attached.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Pierre Ngabirano

LECTURERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

TICK THE RIGHT ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OR COMPLETE THE BLANKS WHERE IT IS NECESSARY.

1. a) The English language makes use of stress in its pronunciation. Do Burundi students face difficulties with stress patterns?

Yes

No

b) If no, why?:

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2. a) When students are speaking in class, do their speech respect stress patterns? Yes No

b) If no, why?

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The appendices 3 and 4: are the texts used as reading test respectively for the junior and the senior levels.

Source of the texts:

Nteziryayo A. (2011-2012). *The United Nation and International Affairs*;

The Worlds' Great Speeches Collection. In the Syllabus of Oral

Expression Course

question, and more than glad of the chance, yet I am by this very unnecessary opposition to-night incapacitated physically from doing it. Ladies and gentlemen, I bid you good evening.

Susan B. Anthony ✓

[1820-1906]

Susan B. Anthony, of New York, noted advocate of temperance, anti-slavery and woman suffrage, was arrested in 1872 for casting a vote in the Presidential election. She was fined \$100, refused to pay the fine, and never did pay it. The following speech was delivered in 1873.

ON WOMAN'S RIGHT TO SUFFRAGE

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:—I stand before you to-night under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.

For any State to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people is to pass a bill of attainder, or an *ex post facto* law, and is therefore a violation of the supreme law of the land. By it the blessings of liberty are for ever withheld from women and their female posterity. To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex; the most hateful aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe; an oligarchy of wealth, where the

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rich govern the poor. An oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant, or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters of every household—which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home of the nation.

Webster, Worcester and Bouvier all define a citizen to be a person in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

The only question left to be settled now is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens; and no State has a right to make any law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the constitutions and laws of the several States is to-day null and void, precisely as in every one against negroes.

It is beyond doubt, also, that the comprehension of "democracy" itself, through our debates and these resolutions, acquired clearer and better defined aspects, capable of favoring a conciliatory conception half way between the extremes in which contemporary political thought is struggling.

The establishment of the headquarters committee, at whose opening session I had the honor to preside, is worthy of special mention. As President, it is my duty and my pleasure to extend congratulations to Ambassador Warren Austin and to Mr. Trygve Lie on the success of their efforts toward securing, under very satisfactory conditions, the loan which has made it possible for the committee to begin its task of constructing our future headquarters.

Another aspect of our resolutions which, in my opinion, was highly significant was that of the growing tendency of the Assembly to resort to the International Court of Justice for clarification of the legal aspects of many doubts which still exist in our interpretation of the Charter and even in its application. It would be absurd to deny the court the right to interpret the Charter within the limits of its competence, but the Assembly must play its part in meeting the requirements of political situations.

Among the outstanding gains of this Assembly was that of the growing influence of the opinion of the small states. The freedom and equal standing of nations was, in this session, one of the milestones of our progress. Another noted feature was the concessions made by the great powers to the tendency of the small nations in favor of an ever greater extension of the trusteeship system.

One cannot attempt in our organization to accomplish too much in too short a time. In my opinion we have advanced too fast and endeavored to embrace too many problems. Many of our resolutions suffer from these mistakes with all their negative consequences.

At least a few years will have to pass before our work can become fully effective. It is possible, in the meantime, that setbacks will occur in the rhythm of our work because the effects of the last war will continue to disturb the maintenance of peace and the establishment of its bases. But the United Nations will overcome the errors of any nation or group of nations.

I do not fear for its future, but rather for the future of those who will not understand it and accept its dictates.

All idea of force is today obsolete and negative. The old order, based on political power, is trying to survive, but there is no longer room for predominance through force. The United Nations stands for the new order, based on peaceful accord, on understanding, on free discussion, and on the common and equal responsibility of peoples. It is the organ of world public opinion. This world to which we all aspire can only be constructed by the United Nations.

It is our duty not only to do away with all causes of war with all the means at our disposal, but also to lay the economic, political and social bases for peace.

Oswaldo Aranha

[1894-1960]

Oswaldo Aranha, Brazilian lawyer and diplomat, was a leader during the Vargas revolution in 1930, and after that time served his government in various capacities. He was Ambassador to the United States, and Brazilian representative to the United Nations.

Presented here are parts of the speech delivered by Mr. Aranha as President of the United Nations General Assembly, at the closing session of that body on November 29, 1947, in New York.

A NEW ORDER THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS

This Assembly, even more than the preceding ones, had the merit of exposing world problems and of compelling their definition. It was featured by frankness, by explicitness, by a necessary and courageous approach to realities formerly kept under diplomatic wraps and shrouded by political conveniences.

Such is the principal mission of the United Nations - to unveil truth and to face reality, that its action be properly guided in the maintenance of peace and of the security of peoples.

Those who do not as yet believe in the work of our organization or who doubt the immediate and future results of the action of our Assembly are victims of self-deceit, for the United Nations and the principles embodied in its Charter admit of no denial. This organization can only be a meeting point for men of good will and nations of good faith. We have no room for those who refuse to believe, to hope and to understand.

This Assembly had laid bare the struggles, the divergencies, the misgivings, the rivalries that beset the world today. But these were not created by the United Nations. On the contrary, this organization was created to seek a better solution for such conflicts and maladjustments in international life.

This Assembly was, therefore, a searching of world conscience through the conscience of each and all of the members of the United Nations.

We were not daunted by reality despite its often menacing aspects. There was freedom of speech here and recrimination melted, at times, the debates.

But he who resorts to words hardly ever resorts to force. Strong language has been used here, but this very fact lent us the authority to condemn a proposal which aimed at penalizing freedom of thought, of speech and of writing, which is inherent to human civilization. It did not preclude, however, the adoption of a resolution of "spiritual disarmament" capable of aiding and expediting that of material disarmament, which was adopted at the last session and which was so long desired and so necessary to the peaceful communion of peoples.

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This Assembly has shown an enlightened understanding of this task, and for this reason your decisions will go on record as a memorable contribution toward the peaceful and constructive solution of world problems.

Gentlemen, I thank each and all of you. The second session of the General Assembly is closed. I trust that the third session, in the coming year, will be a step as great as ours has been toward the maintenance of peace and international security.